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National Affairs at Home and Abroad.

SPEECH OF HON. CHARLES SUMNER

AT THE

ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY OF MASSACHUSETTS,

HELD AT WORCESTER, SEPTEMBER 22, 1869.

Mr. SUMNER was selected as President of the Convention. On taking the Chair he spoke as follows:—

Fellow-Citizens of Massachusetts:—While thanking you for the honor conferred upon me, I make haste to say that, in my judgment, Massachusetts has one duty at the coming election to which all local interests and local questions must be postponed, as on its just performance all else depends; and this commanding duty is to keep the Commonwealth now, as aforetime, an example to our country and a bulwark of Human Rights. Such was Massachusetts in those earlier days, when, on the continent of Europe, the name of "Bostonians" was given to our countrymen in arms against the mother country, making this designation embrace all, and when, in the British parliament, the great orator, Edmund Burke, exclaimed, "The cause of Boston is the cause of all America; every part of America is united in support of Boston; Boston is the Lord Mayor of America." I quote these words from the parliamentary debates. But Boston was at that time Massachusetts, and it was her stand for liberty that made her name the synonyme for all. And permit me to add that, in choosing a presiding officer, entirely removed from local issues, I find assurance of your readiness to unite with me in that *National Cause* which concerns not Massachusetts only, but every part of America, and concerns also our place and name as a nation.

The enemy here in Massachusetts would be glad to divert attention from the unassailable principles of the Republican Party; they would be glad to make you forget that support we owe to a Republican Administration; also that support we

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owe to the measures of reconstruction, and our constant abiding persistence for all essential safeguards not yet completely established. These they would hand over to oblivion, hoping on some local appeal to disorganize our forces, or, perhaps, obtain power to be wielded against the national cause. Massachusetts cannot afford to occupy an uncertain position. Therefore, I begin by asking you to think of our country, our whole country,—in other words, of *National Affairs at home and abroad.*

Security for the Future.

It is now four years since I had the honor of presiding at our annual Convention, and I do not forget how at that time I endeavored to remind you of this same national cause then in fearful peril. The war of armies was ended; no longer was fellow-citizen arrayed against fellow-citizen; on each side the trumpet was hushed, the banner furled. But the defection of Andrew Johnson had then begun, and out of that defection the Rebellion assumed new life, with new purposes and new hopes. If it did not spring forth once more fully armed, it did spring forth filled with hate and diabolism towards all who loved the Union, whether white or black. There were exceptions, I know; but they were not enough to change the rule. And straightway the new apparition, acting in conjunction with the northern Democracy, aboriginal allies of the Rebellion, planned the capture of the National Government. Its representatives came up to Washington. Then was the time for a few decisive words—in the name of the Republic on which for four years they waged bloody war. The great dramatist, who has words for every occasion, anticipated this, when he said,—

> "Return thee, therefore, with a flood of tears,
> And wash away thy country's stained spots."

Such a mood would have been the beginning of peace. How easy to see that these men should have been admonished frankly and kindly to return home, there to plant, plough, sow, reap, buy, sell and be prosperous, but not to expect any place in the copartnership of government until there was completest security for all. Instead of this, they were sent back plotting how to obtain ascendency at home as the stepping stone to ascendency in the nation. Such was the condition of things in the autumn of 1865, when, sounding the alarm from this very platform, I insisted upon irreversible guarantees against the Rebellion, and especially for security to the national freedman and the national creditor. It was for security that I then insisted, believing that, though the war of armies was ended, this was a just object of national care, all contained in the famous time-honored postulate of war, *Security for the Future*, without which peace is no better than armistice.

To that security one thing is needed,—simply this: all men must be safe in their rights, so that affairs, whether of government or business, shall have a free and natural course. But there are two special classes still in jeopardy, as in the autumn of 1865—the national freedman and the national creditor,—each a creditor of the nation and entitled to protection; each under the guardianship of the Public Faith,—and behind these are faithful unionists, now suffering terribly from the growing reaction.

Constitutional Amendment.

For the protection of the national freedman a constitutional amendment is presented for ratification, placing their right to vote under the perpetual safeguard of the nation; but I am obliged to remind you that this amendment has not yet obtained the requisite number of States, nor can I say surely when it will. The Democratic party is arrayed against it, and the rebel interest unites with the Democracy. Naturally they go together. They are old cronies. Here let me say frankly that I have never ceased to regret—I do now most profoundly regret—that Congress, in its plenary powers under the Constitution, especially in its great unquestionable power to guarantee a republican government in the States, did not summarily settle this whole question, so that it should no longer disturb the country. It was for Congress to fix the definition of a republican government; nor need it go further than our own Declaration of Independence, where is a definition from which there is no appeal. There it is, as it came from our fathers, in lofty, self-evident truth, and Congress should have applied it. Or it might have gone to the speech of Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg, where again is the same great definition. There was also a decisive precedent. As Congress made a Civil Rights Law, so should it have made a Political Rights Law. In each case the power is identical. If it can be done in the one it can be done in the other. To my mind nothing is clearer. Thus far Congress has thought otherwise. There remains, then, the slow process of constitutional amendment, to which the country must be rallied.

Public Opinion and a Sympathetic Administration.

But this is not enough. No mere text of Constitution or law is sufficient. Behind these must be a prevailing Public Opinion and a sympathetic Administration. Both are needed. The Administration must re-enforce Public Opinion, and Public Opinion must re-enforce the Administration. Such is all experience. Without these the strongest text and most cunning in its requirements is only a phantom, it may be of terror as was the case with the Fugitive Slave Bill, but not a living letter. It is not practically obeyed; sometimes it is evaded; sometimes openly set at naught. And now it is my duty to warn you that the national freedman still needs your care. His ancient master is already in the field conspiring against him. That traditional experience, that infinite audacity, that insensibility to Human Rights, which so long upheld Slavery, are aroused anew. No longer able to hold him as slave, the ancient master means to hold him as dependent and to keep him in his service, personal and political, thus substituting a new bondage for the old. Unhappily he finds at the North a political party which the Rebellion has not weaned from that unnatural Southern breast where it drew its primitive nutriment; and this political party now fraternizes in the dismal work by which peace is postponed; for until the national freedman is safe in Equal Rights there can be no peace. You may call it peace; but I tell you it is not peace. It is peace only in name. Who does not feel that he treads still on smothered fires? Who does not feel his feet burn as he moves over the treacherous ashes? If I wished any new motive for opposition to the Democracy, I should find it in this hostile alliance. Because I am for peace, so that this whole people may be at work; because I desire tranquillity, so that all

may be happy; because I seek reconciliation, so that there shall be completest harmony, therefore, I oppose the democracy and now denounce it as Disturber of the National Peace.

The information from the South is most painful. Old rebels are crawling from hiding places to resume their former rule; and what a rule! Such as might be expected from the representatives of slavery. It is the rule of misrule, where the Ku-Klux-Klan takes the place of missionary and schoolmaster. Murder is unloosed. The national freedman is the victim and so is the unionist. Not one of these States where intimidation with death in its train does not play its part. Take that whole southern tier from Georgia to Texas, and add to it Tennessee, and, I fear, North Carolina and Virginia also—for the crime is contagious—and there is small justice for those to whom you owe so much. That these things should occur under Andrew Johnson was natural; that reconstruction should encounter difficulties after his defection was natural. The great English moralist—another Johnson—did not wonder that a dog in chains danced no better, but that it danced at all; and I do not wonder that reconstruction with the chains upon it succeeded no better, but that it succeeded at all. Andrew Johnson is now out of the way, and in his place a patriot President. Public Opinion must come to his support in this necessary work. There is but one thing these disturbers feel; it is power; and this they must be made to feel; I mean the power of an awakened people, directed by a Republican Administration, vigorously, constantly, surely, so that there shall be no rest for the wicked.

Repudiation.

If I could forget the course of the Democracy on these things, as I cannot, there is still another chapter for exposure, and the more it is seen the worse it appears. It is that standing menace of repudiation, by which the national credit at home and abroad suffers so much, and our taxes are so largely increased. It will not do to say that no national Convention has yet announced this dishonesty. I charge it upon the party. A party which repudiates the fundamental principles of the Declaration of Independence—which repudiates Equality before the Law—which repudiates the self-evident truth that government is founded only on the consent of the governed,—which repudiates what is most precious and good in our recent history—and whose chiefs are now engaged in cunning assault upon the national creditor—is a party of repudiation. This is its just designation. A democrat is a repudiator. What is slavery itself but an enormous wholesale repudiation of all rights, all truths, and all decencies? How easy for a party, accepting this degradation, to repudiate pecuniary obligations? These are small compared with the other. Naturally the Democracy is once more in conjunction with the old slave-masters. The repudiation gospel, according to Mr. Pendleton, is now preaching in Ohio; and nothing is more certain than that the triumph of the Democracy would be a fatal blow not only at the national freedman, but also at the national creditor. There would be repudiation for each.

The word "repudiation," in its present sense, is not old. It first appears in Mississippi, a democratic State intensely devoted to slavery. If the thing were known before, never before did it assume the same hardihood of name. It was in 1841 that a Mississippi Governor, in a message to the legislature, used this

word with regard to certain State bonds, and thus began that policy by which Mississippi was first dishonored and then kept poor; for capital was naturally shy of such a State. Constantly, from that time, Mississippi had this "bad eminence;" nor is the State more known as the home of Jefferson Davis than as the home of repudiation. Unhappily the nation suffered also; and even now, as I understand, it is argued in Europe, to our discredit, that, because Mississippi repudiated, the nation may repudiate also. If I refer to this example, it is because I would illustrate the mischief of the democratic policy and summon Mississippi to tardy justice. A regenerated State cannot afford to bear the burden of repudiation; nor can the nation and the sisterhood of States forget misconduct so injurious to all.

I have pleasure at this point in reference to an early effort in the "North American Review," by an able lawyer, for a time an ornament of the Supreme Court of the United States, Hon. B. R. Curtis, who, after reviewing the misconduct of Mississippi, argues most persuasively that, where a State repudiates its obligations to the detriment of foreigners, there is a remedy through the national government. This suggestion is important for Mississippi now. But the article contains another warning applicable to the nation at the present hour, which I quote:—

"The conduct of a few States has not only destroyed their own credit and left their sister States very little to boast of, but has so materially affected the credit of the whole Union, that it was found impossible to negotiate in Europe any part of the loan authorized by Congress in 1842. It was offered on terms most advantageous to the creditor; terms which in former times would have been eagerly accepted; and after going a begging through all the Exchanges of Europe, the agent gave up the attempt to obtain the money in despair."—["*North American Review*" *for January*, 1844, *Vol.* 58, *p.* 150.

As the fallen drunkard illustrates the evils of intemperance, so does Mississippi illustrate the evils of repudiation. Look at her. But there are men who would degrade our republic to this wretched condition. Forgetting what is due to our good name as a nation at home and abroad; forgetting that the public interests are bound up with the Public Faith, involving all economies, national and individual; forgetting that our transcendent position has corresponding obligations, and that, as nobility once obliged to great duty—*noblesse oblige*—so does republicanism now,—there are men who, forgetting all these things, would carry our republic into this terrible gulf, so full of shame and sacrifice. They begin by subtle devices; but already the mutterings of open repudiation are heard. I denounce them all, whether device or muttering, and I denounce that political party which lends itself to the outrage.

Repudiation is Confiscation.

Repudiation mean confiscation, and, in the present case, confiscation of the property of loyal citizens. With unparalleled generosity the nation has refused to confiscate rebel property; and now it is proposed to confiscate loyal property. When I expose repudiation as confiscation, I mean to be precise. Between two enactments, one requiring the surrender of property without compensation, and the other declaring that the nation shall not and will not pay an equal amount according to solemn promise, there can be no just distinction. The two are alike.

The former might alarm a greater number, because on its face more demonstrative. But analyze the two, and you will see that in each private property is taken by the nation without compensation and appropriated to its own use. Therefore do I say repudiation is confiscation.

Devices.

A favorite device of repudiation is to pay the national debt in greenbacks—in other words, to pay bonds bearing interest with mere promises not bearing interest, violating, in the first place, a rule of honesty, which forbids such a trick, and, in the second place, a rule of law which refuses to recognize an inferior obligation as payment of a superior. Here in plain terms is repudiation of the interest and indefinite postponement of the principal. This position, when first broached, contemplated nothing less than an infinite issue of greenbacks flooding the country, as France was flooded by *assignats*, and utterly destroying values of all kinds. Although in its present more moderate form it is limited to payment by existing greenbacks, yet it has the same radical injustice. Interest-bearing bonds are to be paid with non-interest-bearing bits of paper. The statement of the case is enough. Its proposer would never do this thing in his own affairs, but how can he ask his country to do what honesty forbids in private life?

Another device is to tax the bonds when the money was lent on the positive condition that the bonds should not be taxed. This, of course, is to break the contract in another way. It is repudiation in another form.

Extra Interest Caused by Devices of Repudiation.

To argue these questions is happily unnecessary, and I allude to them only because I wish to exhibit the loss to the country from such attempts. This can be made plain as a church door.

The total debt of our country on the 1st September, aside from the sixty millions of bonds issued to the Pacific Railway, was $2,475,962,501; and here I mention, with great satisfaction, that since the 1st March last the debt has been reduced $49,500,000. The surplus revenue now accruing is not less than $100,000,000 a year, and will be, probably, not less than $125,000,000 a year, of which large sum not less than $75,000,000 must be attributed to the better enforcement of the laws and the economy now prevailing under a Republican Administration. And here comes the practical point. Large as is our surplus revenue, it should have been more, and would have been more but for the repudiation menaced by the Democracy.

If we look at our bonded debt, we find it is now $2,107,936,300, upon which we pay not less than $124,000,000 in annual interest, the larger part at six per cent., the smaller at five per cent. gold. The difference between this interest and that paid by other Powers is the measure of our annual loss. English three per cents. and French fours are firm in the market; but England and France have not the same immeasurable resources that are ours; nor is either so secure in its government. It is easy to see that our debt could have been funded without paying more than four per cent., but for the doubt cast upon our credit by the dishonest schemes of repudiation. "Payment in greenbacks" and "taxation of bonds" are costly cries. Without these there would have been $40,000,000

annually to swell our surplus revenue. But this sum, if invested in a sinking fund at four per cent. interest, would pay the whole bonded debt in less than thirty years. Such is our annual loss.

The sum total of this loss directly chargable upon the repudiators is more than one hundred millions, already paid in taxes; and much I fear, fellow-citizens, that before the nation can recover from the discredit inflicted upon it, another hundred millions will be paid in the same way. It is hard to see this immense treasure, wrung by taxation from the toil of the people, to pay these devices of a dishonest Democracy. Do not forget that the cost of this experiment is confined to no particular class. Wherever the tax-gatherer goes there it is paid. Every workman pays it in his food and clothing; every mechanic and artisan in his tools; every housewife in her cooking stove and flat-iron; every merchant in the stamp upon his note; every man of salary in the income tax; aye, every laborer in his wood, his coal, his potatoes, and his salt. Many of these taxes imposed under duress of war, will be removed soon, I trust; but still the enormous sum of forty millions annually must be contributed by the labor of the country until the world is convinced that in spite of democratic menace, the republic will maintain its plighted faith to the end.

People wish to reduce taxation. I tell you how. Let no doubt rest upon the Public Faith. Then will the present burdensome taxation grow "fine by degrees and beautifully less." *It is the doubt which costs.* It is with our country, as with an individual, the doubt obliges the payment of *extra interest.* To stop that extra interest we must keep faith.

Absurdity and Aggravation.

As we look at the origin of the greenback we shall find a new motive for fidelity. I do not speak of that patriotic character which commends the national debt; but of the financial principle on which the greenback was first issued. It came from the overruling exigencies of self-defence. The national existence depended upon money, which could be had only through a forced loan. The greenback was the agency by which it was collected. The disloyal party resisted the passage of the original act, prophesying danger and difficulty. But the safety of the nation required the risk and the Republican Party assumed it. And now this same disloyal party, once against the greenback, insist upon continuing in peace what was justified only in war — insist upon a forced loan, when the overruling exigencies of self-defence have ceased, and the nation is saved. To such absurdity is this party now driven.

The case is aggravated when we consider the boundless resources of the country, through which in a short time even this great debt will be lightened, if the praters of repudiation are silenced. Peace, financially as well as politically, is needed. Let us have peace. Nowhere will it be felt more than at the South, which is awakening to a consciousness of resources unknown while slavery ruled. With these considerable additions to the national capital, five years cannot pass without a sensible diminution of our burdens. A rate of taxation *per capita*, equal to only one-half that of 1866, will pay even our present interest, all present expenses, and the entire principal in less than twenty years. But to this end we must keep faith.

Repudiation Impossible.

The attempt is aggravated still further, when it is considered that repudiation is impossible. Try as you may, you cannot succeed You may cause incalculable distress and postpone the great day of peace, but you cannot do this thing. The national debt never can be repudiated. It will be paid, dollar for dollar, in coin, with interest to the end.

How little do these repudiators know the mighty resisting power which they encounter! How little the mighty crash which they invite! As well undertake to move Mount Washington from its everlasting base, or shut out the ever present ocean from our coasts. It is needless to say that the crash would be in proportion to the mass affected, being nothing less than the whole business of the country. Now, it appears from investigations making at this moment by Commissioner Wells, whose labors shed such light on financial questions, that our *annual product reaches the sum of seven thousand millions of dollars.* But this prodigious amount depends for its value upon exchange, which in turn depends upon credit. Destroy exchange, and even these untold resources would be an infinite chaos, without form and void. Employment would cease, capital would waste, mills would stop, the rich would become poor, the poor, I fear, would starve. Savings banks, trust companies, insurance companies would disappear. Such would be the mighty crash; but here you see also the mighty resisting power. Therefore, again do I say, repudiation is impossible.

Mr. Boutwell is criticized by the Democracy because he buys up bonds, paying the current market rates, when he should pay the face in greenbacks. I refer to this democratic criticism because I would show how little its authors look to consequences while forgetting the requirements of Public Faith. Suppose the secretary, yielding to these wise suggestions, should announce his purpose to take up the first ten millions of five-twenties, paying the face in greenbacks. What then? "After us the deluge," said the French king; and so, after such notice from our secretary, would our deluge begin. At once the entire bonded debt would be reduced to greenbacks. The greenback would not be raised; the bond would be drawn down. All this at once,—and in plain violation of the solemn declaration of both Houses of Congress pledging payment in coin. But who can measure the consequences? Bonds would be thrown upon the market. From all points of the compass, at home and abroad, they would come. Business would be disorganized. Prices would be changed. Labor would be crushed. The fountains of the great deep would be broken up and the deluge would be upon us.

National Banks and Specie Payments.

Among the practical agencies, to which the country owes much already, are the national banks. Whatever may be the differences of opinion with regard to them, they cannot fail to be taken into account in all financial discussions. As they have done good where they are now established, I would gladly see them extended, especially at the South and West, where they are much needed, and where abundant crops already supply the capital. It is doubtful if this can be done without removing the currency limitation in the existing bank act. In this event I should like the condition that for every new bank note issued a green-

back should be cancelled, thus substituting the bank note for the greenback. In this way greenbacks would be reduced in volume, while currency is supplied by the banks. Such diminution of the national paper would be an important stage toward specie payments, while the national banks in the South and West, founded on the bonds of the United States, would be a new security for the national credit. In making this suggestion, I would not forget the necessity of specie payments at the earliest possible moment, nor can I forbear to declare my unalterable conviction, that by proper exertion this supreme object may be accomplished promptly, always provided the national credit is kept above suspicion, or, like the good knight, "without fear and without reproach."

Public Faith.

Thus, fellow-citizens, at every turn are we brought back to one single point, the Public Faith, which cannot be dishonored without infinite calamity. The child is told not to tell a lie; but this injunction is the same for the full-grown man, and for the nation also. We cannot tell a lie to the national freedman or the national creditor; we cannot tell a lie to anybody. That word of shame cannot be ours. But falsehood to the national freedman and the national creditor is a national lie. Breaking promise with either, you are dishonored, and *liar* must be stamped upon the forehead of the nation. Beyond the ignominy, which all of us must bear, will be the influence of such a transgression in discrediting republican government and the very idea of a republic. For weal or woe, we are an example. Mankind is now looking to us, and just in proportion to the eminence we have reached is the eminence of our example. Already we have shown how a republic can conquer in arms, offering millions of citizens and untold treasure at call. It remains for us to show how a republic can conquer in a field more glorious than battle, where all these millions of citizens and all this untold treasure uphold the Public Faith. Such an example will elevate republican government, and make the idea of a republic more than ever great and splendid. Helping here, you help not only your own country, but help humanity also; help liberal institutions in all lands; help the down-trodden everywhere, and all who struggle against the wrong and tyranny of earth.

The brilliant Frenchman, Montesquieu, in that remarkable work which occupied so much attention during the last century, the *Spirit of Laws*, pronounces *honor* the animating sentiment of monarchy; but *virtue* the animating sentiment of a republic. It is for us to show that he was right; nor can we depart from this rule of virtue without disturbing the order of the universe. Faith is nothing less than a part of that sublime harmony by which the planets wheel surely in their appointed orbits, and nations are summoned to justice. Nothing too lofty for its power; nothing too lowly for its protection. It is an essential principle in the divine Cosmos, without which confusion reigns supreme. All depends upon faith. Why do you build? Because you have faith in those laws by which you are secured in person and property. Why do you plant? Why do you sow? Because you have faith in the returning seasons, faith in the generous skies, faith in the sun. But faith in this republic must be fixed as the sun, which illumines all. I cannot be content with less. Full well I see that every departure from this great law is only to our ruin, and from the height we have

reached, the tumble will be like that of the Grecian god from the battlements of Heaven :—

> ——"From morn
> To noon he fell; from noon to dewy eve—
> A summer's day, and with the setting sun
> Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star."

It only remains, come what may, that we should at all hazards preserve this Public Faith,—never forgetting that honesty is not only the best policy but the golden rule. For myself, I see nothing more practical at this moment than, first, at all points to oppose the Democracy, and, secondly, to insist that yet a while longer ex-rebels shall be excused from copartnership in government. Do not think me harsh; do not think me austere. I am not. I will not be outdone by anybody in clemency; nor at the proper time will I be behind any one in opening all doors of office and trust. But the proper time has not yet come. There must be security for the future, unquestionable and ample, before I am ready, and this I would require, not only for the sake of the national freedman and the national creditor, but for the sake of the country, containing the interests of all, and also of the ex-rebel himself, whose truest welfare is in that peace where all controversy shall be extinguished forever. In this there is nothing but equity and prudence according to received precedents. The ancient historian declares that the ancestors of Rome, the most religious of men, took nothing from the vanquished but the license to do wrong—*majores nostri, religiosissimi mortales, nihil victis eripiebant præter injuriæ licentiam. (Cat. Bell,* cap. 12.) These are the words of Sallust. I know no better example for our present guidance. Who can object if men recently arrayed against their country are told to stand aside yet a little longer until all are secure in their rights? Here is no fixed exclusion,—nothing of which there can be any just complaint,—nothing which is not practical, wise, humane,—nothing which is not born of justice rather than victory. In the establishment of Equal Rights conquest loses its character, and is no longer conquest ;—

> "For then both parties nobly are subdued,
> And neither party loser."

Even in the uncertainty of the future it is easy to see that the national freedman and the national creditor have a common fortune. In the terrible furnace of war they were joined together, nor can they be separated until the rights of both are fixed beyond change. Therefore, could my voice reach them, I would say—"Freedman, stand by the creditor; creditor, stand by the freedman." And to the people I would say, "Stand by both."

Foreign Affairs.

From affairs at home I turn to affairs abroad, and here I wish to speak cautiously. In speaking at all I break a vow with myself not to open my lips on these questions except in the Senate. I yield to friendly pressure. And yet I know no reason why I should not speak. It was Talleyrand who to somebody apologizing for what might be an indiscreet question, replied that an answer might be indiscreet, but not a question. My answer shall at least be frank.

In our foreign relations there are with me two cardinal principles which I have no hesitation to avow at all times; first, peace with all the world, and secondly, sympathy with all struggling for Human Rights. In neither of these would I fail, for each is essential. Peace is our all-conquering ally. Through peace the whole world will be ours. "Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace," and there is nothing we cannot do. Filled with the might of peace, the sympathy we extend will have a persuasive power. Following these plain principles, we should be open so that foreign nations shall know our sentiments, and in such way that even where there is a difference there shall be no just cause for offence.

Relations with Spain.

In this spirit I would now approach Spain. Who can forget that great historic monarchy, on whose empire, encircling the globe, the sun never set? Patron of that renowned navigator, through whom she became the discoverer of this hemisphere, her original sway within it surpassed that of any other Power. At last her extended possessions on the main, won by Cortez and Pizarro, loosed themselves from her grasp, to take their just place in the Family of Nations. Cuba and Porto Rico, rich islands of the Gulf, remained. And now Cuban insurgents demand independence also. For months they have engaged in deadly conflict with the Spanish Power. Ravaged provinces and bloodshed are the witnesses. The beautiful island, where sleeps Christopher Columbus, with the epitaph that he gave to Castile and Leon a new world, is fast becoming a desert, while the nation to which he gave the new world is contending for its last possession there. On this simple statement two questions occur, first, as to the duty of Spain, and seeondly, as to the duty of the United States.

Unwelcome as it may be to that famous Castilian pride, which has played so lofty a part in modern Europe, Spain must not refuse to see the case in its true light; nor can she close her eyes to the lesson of history. She must recall how the thirteen American colonies achieved independence against all the power of England—how all her own colonies on the American main achieved independence against her own most strenuous efforts—how at this moment England is preparing to release her northern colonies from their condition of dependence; and recalling these examples, it will be proper for her to consider if they do not illustrate a tendency of all colonies, which was remarked by an illustrious Frenchman, even before the independence of the United States. Never was anything more prophetic in politics than when Turgot, in 1750, said: "Colonies are like fruit, which hold to the tree only until maturity—when sufficient to themselves, doing what Carthage did, *what some day America will do.*" These most remarkable words of the philosopher-statesman will be found in his Discourse at the Sorbonne; and now for their application. Has not Cuba reached his condition of maturity? Is it not sufficient for itself? At all events, is victory over a colony contending for independence worth the blood and treasure it will cost? These are serious questions, which can be answered properly only by putting aside all passion and prejudice of empire, and calmly confronting the actual condition of things. Nor must the case of Cuba be confounded for a moment with our wicked rebellion, having for its object the dismemberment of a republic to found a New Power, with slavery as its vaunted corner-stone. For myself, I cannot doubt that, in the interest of both parties, Cuba and Spain, and in the in-

terest of humanity also, the contest should be closed. This is my judgment on the facts, so far as known to me. Cuba must be saved from its bloody delirium, or little will be left for the final conqueror. Nor can the enlightened mind fail to see that the Spanish Power on this island is an anachronism. The day of European colonies has passed—at least in this hemisphere, where the rights of man were first proclaimed and self-government first organized. A governor from Europe, nominated by a crown, is a constant witness against these fundamental principles.

As the true course of Spain is clear, so to my mind is the true course of the United States equally clear. It is to avoid involving ourselves in any way. Enough of war have we had without heedlessly assuming another; enough has our commerce been driven from the ocean without heedlessly arousing another enemy; enough of taxation are we compelled to bear without adding another mountain. Two policies were open to us at the beginning of the insurrection. One was to unite our fortunes with the insurgents, assuming the responsibilities of such an alliance with the hazard of letters of marque issued by Spain and of public war. I say nothing of the certain consequences in expenditure, and in damages A Spanish letter of marque would not be less destructive than the English Alabama. The other policy was to make Spain feel that we wish her nothing but good, and that, especially since the expulsion of her royal dynasty, we cherish for her a cordial and kindly sympathy. It is said that republics are ungrateful, but I would not forget that, at the beginning of our revolutionary struggle, our fathers were aided by her money, as afterwards by her arms, and that her great statesmen, Florida Blanca, by his remarkable energies determined the organization of that armed neutrality in Northern Europe which turned the scale against England,—so that John Adams declared, "We owe the blessings of peace to the armed neutrality." I say nothing of the motives by which Spain was then governed. It is something that in our day of need she lent us a helping hand.

It is evident that, adopting the first policy, we should be powerless, except as an enemy. The second policy may enable us to exercise an important influence.

The more I reflect upon the actual condition of Spain, the more I am satisfied that the true rule for us is non-intervention, except in the way of good offices. This ancient kingdom is now engaged in comedy and tragedy. You have heard of *Hunting the Slipper*. The Spanish comedy is *Hunting a King*. The Spanish tragedy is sending armies against Cuba. I do not wish to take part in the comedy or the tragedy. If Spain is wise she will give up both. Meanwhile we have a duty which is determined by International Law. To that venerable authority I repair. What that prescribes I follow.

Recognition of Belligerence.

By that law, as I understand it, nations are not left to any mere caprice. There is a rule of conduct which they must follow, subject always to just accountability where they depart from it. On ordinary occasions there is no question; for it is with nations as with individuals. It is only where the rule is obscure or precedents are uncertain, that doubt arises, as with some persons now. Here I wish to be explicit. Belligerence is a "fact," attested by evidence. If the "fact" does not exist, there is nothing to recognize. The fact cannot be invented or imagined; it must be proved. No matter what our sympathy, what

the extent of our desires, we must look at the fact. There may be insurrection without reaching this condition, which is at least the half-way house to independence. The Hungarians, when they rose against Austria, obtained no such recognition, although they had large armies in the field, and Kossuth was their governor; the Poles, in repeated insurrections against Russia, obtained no such recognition, although the conflict made Europe vibrate; the Sepoys and Rajahs of India failed also, although for a time the English empire hung trembling; nor, in my opinion, were our slave-mad rebels ever entitled to such recognition; for, whatever the strength of the Rebellion on land, it remained as in the case of Hungary, of Poland, of India, without those Prize Courts which are absolutely esaential to recognition by foreign powers. *A cruizer without accountability to Prize Courts is a lawless monster, which civilized nations cannot sanction.* Therefore the Prize Court is the condition precedent; nor is this all. If the Cuban insurgents have come within any of the familiar requirements, I have never seen the evidence. They are in arms, I know. But where are their cities, towns, provinces? Where their government? Where their ports? Where their tribunals of justice? and where their Prize Courts? To put these questions is to answer them. How then is the "fact" of belligerence?

There is another point in the case which is with me final. Even if they come within the prerequisites of international law, I am unwilling to make any recognition of them so long as they continue to hold human beings as slaves, which I understand they now do. I am told that there was a decree in May last, purporting to be signed by Cespedes, abolishing slavery; then I am told of another decree in July, maintaining slavery. There is also the story of a pro-slavery constitution to be read at home, and an anti-slavery constitution to be read abroad. Nor is there any evidence that any decree or constitution has had any practical effect. In this uncertainty I shall wait, even if all other things are propitious. In any event there must be Emancipation.

On the recognition of belligerence there is much latitude of opinion — some asserting that a nation may take this step whenever it pleases; but this pretension excludes the idea that belligerence is always a question of fact on the evidence. Undoubtedly an independent nation may do anything in its power whenever it pleases; but subject always to just accountability, if another suffers from what it does. This may be illustrated in the three different cases of war, independence, and belligerence. In each case the declaration is an exercise of high prerogative, inherent in every nation, and kindred to that of eminent domain; but a nation declaring war without just cause becomes a wrong-doer; a nation recognizing independence where it does not exist in fact, becomes a wrong-doer; and so a nation recognizing belligerence where it does not exist in fact, becomes a wrong-doer also. Any present uncertainty on the latter point I attribute to the failure of precedents sufficiently clear and authoritative; but with me there is one rule in such a case which I cannot disobey. In the absence of any precise injunction, I do not hesitate to adopt that interpretation of international law which most restricts war, and all that makes for war — believing that in this way I shall best promote civilization and obtain new security for international peace.

Relations with England.

From the case of Spain I pass to the case of England, contenting myself with a brief explanation. On this subject I have never spoken except with pain, as I have been obliged to expose a great transgression. I hope to say nothing now which shall augment difficulties, although, when I consider how British anger was aroused by an effort in another place, judged by all who heard it most pacific in character, I do not know that even these few words may not be misinterpreted.

There can be no doubt that we received from England incalculable wrong — greater, I have often said, than was ever before received by one civilized power from another short of unjust war. I do not say this in bitterness, but in sadness. There can be no doubt that, through English complicity, our carrying trade was transferred to English bottoms; our foreign commerce sacrificed, while our loss was England's gain; our blockade rendered more expensive, and generally that our war, with all its fearful cost of blood and treasure, was prolonged indefinitely. This terrible complicity began with the wrongful recognition of rebel belligerence, under whose shelter pirate ships were built and supplies sent forth. All this was at the very moment of our mortal agony, in the midst of a struggle for national life, and it was done in support of rebels whose single declared object of separate existence as a nation was slavery, being in this respect clearly distinguishable from an established Power where slavery is tolerated without being made the vaunted corner-stone. Such is the case. Who shall fix the measure of this great accountability? For the present it is enough to expose it. I make no demand,— not a dollar of money — not a word of apology. I show simply what England has done to us. It will be for her, on a careful review of the case, to determine what reparation to offer. It will be for the American people, on a careful review of the case, to determine what reparation to require. On this head I content myself with the aspiration that out of this surpassing wrong and the controversy it has engendered, may come some enduring safeguard for the future, some landmark of humanity. Then will our losses end in gain for all, while the Law of Nations is elevated. But I have little hope of any adequate settlement until our case, in its full extent, is heard. In all controversies the first stage of justice is to understand the case; and, sooner or later, England must understand ours.

The English arguments, so far as argument can be found in the recent heats, have not in any respect impaired the justice of our complaint. Loudly it is said that there can be no sentimental damages, or damages for wounded feelings, and then our case is dismissed as having nothing but this foundation. Now, without undertaking to say that there is no remedy in the case supposed, I wish it understood that our complaint is for damages traced directly to England. If the amount is unprecedented, so also is the wrong. The scale of damages is naturally in proportion to the scale of operations. Who among us doubts that these damages were received? Call them what you please, to this extent the nation lost. The records show how our commerce suffered, and witnesses without number testify how the blockade was broken and the war prolonged. Ask any of our great generals — ask Sherman, Sheridan, Thomas, Meade, Burnside — ask Grant. In view of this transcendent wrong, it is a disparagement of interna-

tional law to say that there is no remedy. An eminent English judge once pronounced from the bench that "the law is astute to find a remedy;" but no astuteness is required in this case — nothing but simple justice, which is always the object of a true diplomacy. How did the Nation suffer? To what extent? These are the practical questions. No technicality can be set up on either side. *Damages* are *damages*, no matter by what artificial term they may be characterized. Opposing them as *consequential* shows the disposition to escape by technicality, even while confessing an equitable liability,— since England is bound for *all the consequences* of her conduct,— bound under International Law, which is a Law of Equity always, and bound, no matter how the damages occurred, *always provided they proceeded from her*. Because the damages are national, because all suffered instead of one, this is no reason for immunity on her part.

Then it is said, why not consider our good friends in England, and especially those noble working men who stood by us so bravely? We do consider them always, and give them gratitude for their generous alliance. They belong to what our own poet has called "the long nobility of toil." But they are not England. We trace no damages to them, nor to any class, high or low, but to England — corporate England, through whose government we suffered.

Then, again, it is said, why not exhibit an account against France? For the good reason that, while France erred with England in recognition of rebel belligerence, no pirate ships or blockade-runners were built under shelter of this recognition to prey upon our commerce. The two cases are wide asunder, and they are distinguished by two different phrases of the common law. The recognition of rebel belligerence in France was *damnum absque injuria*, or wrong without injury; but that same recognition in England was *damnum cum injuria*, or wrong with injury, and it is of this unquestionable injury that we complain.

Canada.

Fellow citizens:—It cannot be doubted that this great question, so long as it continues pending, will be a cloud always upon the relations of two friendly Powers, when there should be sunshine. Good men on both sides should desire its settlement, and in such way as most to promote good will, and make the best precedent for civilization. But there can be no good will without justice, nor can any "snap judgment" establish any rule for the future. Nothing will do now but a full inquiry without limitation or technicality and a candid acceptance of the result. There must be equity, which is justice without technicality. Sometimes there are whispers of territorial compensation, and Canada is named as the consideration. But he knows England little, and little also of that great English liberty from Magna Charta to the Somersett case, who supposes that this nation could undertake any such transfer. And he knows our country little, and little also of that great liberty which is ours, who supposes that we could receive such a transfer. On each side there is impossibility. Territory may be conveyed, but not a people. I allude to this suggestion only because appearing in the public press it has been answered from England. But the United States can never be indifferent to Canada, nor to the other British provinces, near neighbors and kindred. It is well known, historically, that even before the

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Declaration of Independence our fathers hoped that Canada would take part with them. Washington was strong in this hope; so was Franklin.

The Continental Congress, by solemn resolution, invited Canada, and then appointed a Commission, with Benjamin Franklin at its head, "to form a Union between the Colonies and the people of Canada." In the careful instructions of the Continental Congress, signed in their behalf by John Hancock, President, the commissioners are, among other things, enjoined to remind the Canadians that "it is our earnest desire to adopt them into the Union as a sister colony, and to secure the same general system of mild and equable laws for them and ourselves, with only such local differences as may be agreeable to each colony respectively," and further, that in the opinion of the Continental Congress, "their interest and ours are inseparably united." (*"American Archives, vol. V, p. 412, 4th series.*) Long ago the Continental Congress passed away, living only in its deeds. Long ago the great Commissioner rested from his labors to become a star in our firmament. But the invitation survives not only in the archives of our history, but in all American hearts, constant and continuing as when first issued, believing as we do, that such a union, in the fulness of time, with the good will of the mother country and the accord of both parties, must be the harbinger of infinite good. Nor do I doubt that this will be accomplished. Such a union was clearly foreseen by the late Richard Cobden, who in a letter to myself, bearing date, London, 7th November, 1849, wrote: —"I agree with you that nature has decided that *Canada and the United States must become one* for all purposes of intercommunication. Whether they also shall be united in the same Federal Government must depend upon the two parties to the union. I can assure you that there will be no repetition of the policy of 1776 on our part to prevent our North American colonies from pursuing their interests in their own way. If the people of Canada are tolerably unanimous in wishing to sever the very slight thread which now binds them to this country, I see no reason why, if good faith and ordinary temper be observed, it should not be done amicably." Nearly twenty years have passed since these prophetic words, and enough has already taken place to give assurance of the rest. "Reciprocity," once established by treaty, and now so often desired on both sides, will be transfigured in Union, while our Plural Unit is strengthened and extended.

The end is certain; nor shall we wait long for its mighty fulfilment. Its beginning is the establishment of peace at home, through which the national unity shall become manifest. This is the first step. The rest will follow. In the procession of events it is now at hand, and he is blind who does not discern it. From the frozen sea to the tepid waters of the Mexican gulf, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the whole vast continent — smiling with outstretched prairies, where the coal-fields below vie with the infinite corn-fields above — teeming with iron, copper, silver and gold — filling fast with a free people, to whom the telegraph and steam are constant servants—breathing already with schools, colleges and libraries—interlaced by rivers which are great highways—studded with inland seas where fleets are sailing, and "poured round all old Ocean's" constant tides, with tributary commerce and still expanding domain,—such will be the Great Republic, one and indivisible, with a common Constitution, a common Liberty, and a common Glory.

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